

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-02 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 IO-10

DPW-01 AID-05 EB-07 OMB-01 SR-02 ORM-01 ACDA-05 SAM-01

SAJ-01 NIC-01 /088 W

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R 170445Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3716

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 2970

NOFORN

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM DANANG 244 SENT ACTION TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON
MARCH 17 BEING REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 0244

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJ: MOOD IN HUE

REF: DANANG 0129

1. CONGEN POLOFF/HUE REPORTED MARCH 15 THAT THE COMMUNIST ATTACKS WHICH BEGAN ON MAR 7 AND THE INFLUX OF REFUGEES FROM QUANG TRI HAVE NOTICEABLY INCREASED THE UNEASINESS OF THE POPULATION OF HUE. CONVERSATIONS OF VIETNAMESE WITH CONGEN REPRESENTATIVES FOCUS ON QUESTIONS OF COMMUNIST INTENT AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ARVN DEFENSE OF AREA. PEOPLE APPEAR SOMEWHAT REASSURED, HOWEVER, BY THE PROMPT ELIMINATION OF THE COMMUNIST FORCES WHICH INFILTRATED LOWLANDS ON AND AFTER MAR 7 AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF PANIC IN CITY. COMMERCE AND CITY LIFE REMAIN LITTLE CHANGED.

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2. CONVERSATIONS WITH LOCAL FIGURES INDICATE THAT THERE IS NO MASSIVE ATTEMPT TO LEAVE THE CITY NOW. CITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN BUUTON CLAIMED TO CONGEN REPRESENTATIVE THAT HE HAD ENCOURAGED BUSINESSMEN TO REMAIN IN CITY AND KEEP THEIR SHOPS OPEN, AND IN FACT FEW STORES ARE CLOSED. THE CATHOLIC VICAR GENERAL OF THE HUE DIOCESE, FATHER NGUYEN VAN LAP, INFORMED CONGEN REP THAT WHILE MANY OF THE RICH HAVE SENT THEIR WIVES AND (MORE OFTEL) THEIR CHILDREN TO SAIGON, THE MEN REMAIN. MOST OF THE MEMBERS OF THE LOWER ECONOMIC CLASSES ARE ALSO STAYING AND LAP ATTRIBUTED THIS TO THE FACT THAT PEOPLE ARE SOMEWHAT INURED TO THESE SCARES AND ALSO BECAUSE HE SAYS PEOPLE REALIZE THAT HUE IS NOT NECESSARILY ANY MORE DANGEROUS THEN OTHER PLACES IN VIET NAM.

3. CHECKS WITH AIR VIET NAM REVEAL ONLY MODERATE INCREASE IN BOOKINGS SOUTH. FLIGHTS NORMALLY BOOKED TWO TO THREE DAYS IN ADVANCE ARE NOW BOOKED FIVE DAYS IN ADVANCE. CHEAPEST FLIGHT TO SAIGON IS NOW 18,015 PIASTRES AND IS PRICED OUT OF REACH OF AL BUT FEW. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF SCALPING OF THESE TICKETS NOW.

4. CHECK WITH BUS STATION MANAGER AND TAXI DRIVER REVEALS THAT FARES TO DANANG BY ROAD ARE UNCHANGED AND RANGE FROM 450 TO 600 PIASTRES PER TRIP.

5. CONFIDENCE (OR PRUDENCE), HOWEVER, VARIES FROM PERSON TO PERSON. THICH CHANH TRUC, PRINCIPAL REPRESENTATIVE OF UNIFIED BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION FOR QUANG TRI WILLINGLY MET WITH CONGEN REP MAR 13, BUT THICH DUC TAM, DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE OF UBA FOR THUA THIEN REFUSED REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT ON MAR 14, TELLING EMISSARY THAT "THE CIRCUMSTANCES ARE NOT PROPITIOUS FOR MEETING FOREIGNERS."
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